The Golden Oldies

In this issue we pay tribute to the remarkable Bob Watson, whose enthusiam for football has been burning passionately for over 50 years.

Bob Watson may have set something of a record in Western Australian football.

The former referee has been actively involved with the game in the State for 52 years — and is still going strong at the age of 67.

In his time Bob has been a player, a club administrator, a treasurer and bookkeeper for various junior and senior organisations, a referee for 30 years and a referees' inspector.

Apart from football, Bob is a keen follower of cricket — and still umpires WACA competitions.

He has umpired 372 games, but this total pales in comparison to the huge number of football games he refereed — well over 12,000.

Perth-born Bob started playing football at a competitive level when he joined Fremantle City at the age of 15 in 1954 and turned out regularly at Gibson Park.

He was mainly a goalkeeper and played one First Division game against Perth City on the Perth Esplanade in the 1950's.

He retired from playing in 1964,

Bob Watson

but had discovered a keen interest in administration during his spell at the club.

He was a teenaged chairman of the Fremantle club from 1956 to 1958, was treasurer from 1959 to 1962 and secretary/treasurer for 1963 and 1964.

Bob was also a delegate to the Soccer Association of WA and was a member of the Steering Committee that organised the creation of Cockburn United by the amalgamation of Fremantle City and Spearwood Rovers.

With his playing days behind him, he turned his attention to becoming a whistler and joined the Australian Soccer Referees Federation in 1965.

He refereed continuously, mainly in the lower leagues but also running the line in major competitions, until his retirement in 1995.

He also officiated at national junior tournaments.

He was treasurer of the WA branch of the ref's body for three spells between 1966 and 2006 and was secretary for 14 years.

These days Bob can still be regularly spotted at local games as a match-day referees' inspector. He also serves on the Referees Technical Committee.

He was granted Life Membership of the refereeing body in 1981 and was inducted into the Hall of Fame's Hall of Recognition in 2002.

HOW TO PLAY THE FAME GAME

Do you fancy making a contribution to the next Hall of Fame induction night, due to be held on July 26, 2008?

If you know someone you consider warrants consideration as a possible inductee, please forward their nominations to the Committee.

Nominations must be received by March, 2008.

The Hall of Champions is for great players — they must meet a strict criteria to qualify — and the Hall of Recognition is for administrators, coaches, referees and others who have made a significant contribution to the game.

The Committee of the Hall of Fame reserves the right to make a final decision on all nominees.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
Chairman: Louis Prospero (0413 041942). **Treasurer:** Bob Brown (9446 3338). **Secretary:** Barbara Gibson (9526 0330). **Others:** John O'Connell, Peter Dimopoulos, Richard Kreider, Craig Hollingsworth, Russell Goodrick and Mel Moffat, who is also editor of The Fame Game.

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THE FAME GAME

(The official newsletter of the Football Hall of Fame Western Australia)

Issue 5 (Spring/Summer 2007)

The impressive line-up of WA's history makers

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

A CROWD of over 140 — including legendary players, iconic administrators and high-profile politicians — turned up to celebrate a significant milestone in the history of Western Australia football in late October, 2007.

The gathering, at the Royal Bar and Brasserie in Perth, paid tribute to the men and women who were the first from Australia to compete in events in Asia in general, and Malaysia in particular.

The occasion was the 40th anniversary of the WA men's State team becoming the first Australian representative side to take part in the prestigious international Merdeka Cup tournament in Malaysia in 1967.

And it was the 30th anniversary of the WA women's State team touring Malaysia and Singapore, becoming the first female side from Australia to dip its toes in Asia.

Many of the players from the men's squads who competed in four successive years, from 1967 to 1970, and several from the women's squad were present to receive trophies to commemorate their achievements. Support staff — coaches, administrators, referees and doctors — also received mementoes.

The event was organised by the Football Hall of Fame Western Australia, whose chairman, Louis Prospero, welcomed the guests, who included the WA Minister for Sport John Kobelke and the Malaysian Consul General, Ahmad Jazri Mohd Johar.

Other VIPs among a star-packed assembly were the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Alannah McTiernan, who is the former patron of the women's football association, the Shadow Minister for Sport Trevor Sprigg and the new Lord Mayor of Perth Lisa Scaffidi.

Also present was Julius Re, who masterminded the march into the Merdeka in 1967 when, as President of the Soccer Federation of WA, he persuaded the national ruling body to sanction the trailblazing venture.

Former Australian captain Gary Marocchi, who is one of WA's Hall of Legends players, was another notable attendee. He had been the coach of the Perth Kangaroos, who were the first team from WA to take part in — and win — the Singapore League in the early 1990's.

Former World Cup and Olympic Games referee Eddie Lennie, who is now involved in the administrative and coaching side of refereeing and regularly travels to Asia in that role, also supported the event.

The Chairman of Football West Kevin Campbell and the Football West CEO Garry Chandler, along with Hall of Fame Patron Julian Burt, were present, as were the numerous sponsors who so generously supported what was a night to remember.

Malaysian Consul General, Ahmad Jazri Mohd Johar (left) with WA Minister for Sport John Kobelke

Mr Kobelke lavished praise on the achievements of the men and women who took part in the Asian adventure. "It was a great trailblazer for the State and it's important that we recognise and cherish their achievements," he said.

"Their efforts helped to open up other opportunities with Australia now being part of the Asian football family.

"We have continued to cement relationships and I met with the President of the Football Association of Malaysia when I was in Kuala Lumpur recently to discuss matters of mutual interest."

Mr Kobelke made a special presentation to the Malaysian Consul General, Mr Johar, who was another to emphasise the importance of the football links between Australia and Malaysia.

Mr Johar also said in his speech that he hoped the Hall of Fame would be successful in its quest to obtain a premises for a proposed Football Museum. "I will lend my support to this venture," he said

BADGE OF HONOUR

Former State goalkeeper Peter Mitchell has donated a significant item of memorabilia to the Football Hall of Fame Western Australia.

Peter took time out from being lauded as one of the history-makers at the Merdeka Cup anniversary get-together to present his father's prized State Team Badge from WA's meeting with England in 1937 to the Hall of Fame Committee.

Committee member Peter Dimopoulos, who was also honoured at the October function as coach of the WA State women's team that toured Asia in 1977, accepted the badge on behalf of the Hall of Fame.

WA played England at Subiaco Oval on August 2, 1937 and lost 6-1 to the visitors.The WA goal was scored by Bill Brackenridge.

Peter's father Charlie, who was born in Forfar in Scotland, came to WA in the early 1930's. He was a plumber by trade, but enjoyed nothing better than following his passion for football by playing for Caledonians and North Perth.

The game against England was Charlie's only appearance as a state team goalkeeper. It had been WA's first representative outing for 10 years and, after a few games in 1938, they didn't play again until after the Second World War in 1947.

Goalkeeping has been a great tradition in the Mitchell family.

Peter's uncle David was also a custodian, as was his brother Ian — but Peter himself started his career as a centre forward before he jumped on the family bandwagon and went between the posts.

Peter played over 30 times for the State, including appearances in two Merdeka Cups.

The Hall of Fame Committee has had Charlie Mitchell's State Badge restored and it is hoped it will eventually be put on display in a Football Museum that the Committee is pushing to be set up in Perth.

Peter Mitchell (right) and Peter Dimopoulous

Football West chairman Kevin Campbell and CEO Garry Chandler are both supportive of the project and are continuing to lobby the State Government in the quest to find a suitable venue.

The Hall of Fame's preferred location for a Museum would be allocated space in Members Equity Stadium, which may be re-developed in the future.

• If you have any memorabilia you would like to donate to the Hall of Fame, please contact Bob Brown on 9446 3338.

JUST WHAT DID DENIS LAW SAY TO ROY STEDMAN?

Roy Stedman (left) and Julius Re

Former referee Roy Stedman was the oldest recipient of a trophy at the Merdeka anniversary event.

Now 82 — and still very lively and alert, as you would expect from a whistler — Roy was presented with a memento of his participation in the Malaysian tournament by Julius Re, who masterminded the State team's Asian adventure when he was President of the Soccer Federation of WA in 1967.

Roy refereed many games over several years in the Merdeka Cup and it was after his efforts in Kuala Lumpur that he received his FIFA Badge to take charge of international events.

"I was very touched to receive my award from Julius," said Roy. "He deserves all the credit for making the push into Malaysia.

"I refereed my first full international in Penang and I was pleasantly surprised when a knock came on the dressing room door and there was Julius. He said he felt that someone from WA should be there to support me. It was a wonderful gesture."

Roy's most famous refereeing appointment was when he took charge of WA's friendly challenge match with Manchester United in 1967 — and sent off Denis Law.

He sent Law packing in the 33rd minute for foul and abusive language, but it didn't stop a star-studded United side winning 7-0 at the WACA Ground.

After 40 years, Roy hasn't quite dropped his guard as to what Law said to him, although he has given a broad hint.

"All I can say is that it would have hurt me very much to put the whistle where he suggested," laughed Roy.

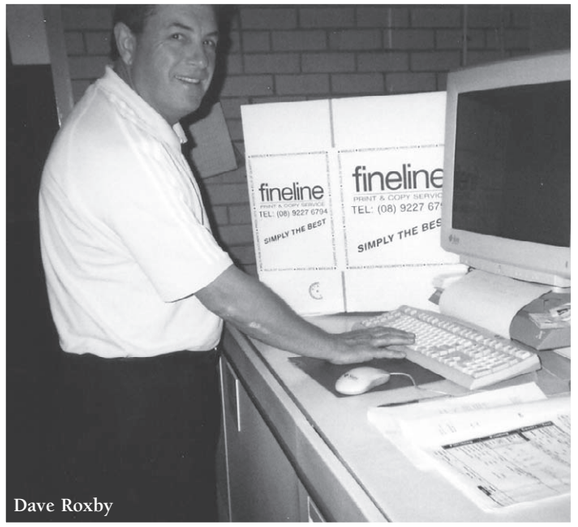
He added: "While I had problems with Law, his captain Bobby Charlton was terrific. He was a real gentleman and the best player I ever refereed in my career."

Roy was a crack ice speed skater in his young days back in his native Brighton in England, and he returned to the sport when he retired from refereeing.

Apart from coaching the WA State side, he took part in the World Masters ice speed skating championships in New York about 20 years ago.

He doesn't skate anymore, but keeps active by doing 30 minutes every morning on an exercise bike.

KEEPING UP THE GOOD WORK



Dave Roxby

Ever wonder what great goalkeepers do after they hang up their gloves?

Well, they don't all end up like one Karol Wojtlya, who traded his gloves after an early goalkeeping career in Poland to become Pope John Paul 11.

Some, like Dave Roxby, Tommy Maras and Paul Kelly, become very successful businessmen — and others, like Tony Franken and Willie McNally, stay in touch with the game in a successful coaching capacity.

Former State keeper Roxby, who was with Newcastle and Sunderland in his youth in England and played in WA for Tricolore, Dalmatinacs and North Perth Croatia as captain, went from being a jobbing printer to running his own company — now rated one of the most successful in Australia.

Dave, 52, is the CEO of Fineline Print and Copy Service, which has premises in Perth and Sydney.

"We are Sydney's leading document printer and we consider ourselves to be No 1 in that field in WA," said Dave, who learnt the printing trade when playing with New Zealand champions Stop Out in the late 1970's.

He was goalkeeping coach for a spell with the WA State senior squad and also several youth State teams, before qutting the game three years ago.

He is an enthusiastic Newcastle supporter and also attends Perth Glory games, where he meets up with the likes of former Glory stopper Maras, Franken, Jason Petkovic, Chris Barbas and Anthony Mori, all keepers. "We seem to have an affinity," laughed Dave.

Maras, who played in the local league with Dalmatinacs and Perth SC, and over 20 times for the State, was Glory's first choice keeper when they entered the NSL in 1996. He retired from playing in 2000 and is now one of Perth's most exclusive builders.

His company builds luxury homes — in luxury areas around the city.

"It's taken off since the building boom and there is a big demand for good, quality homes," said Tommy, who still dabbles in a bit of coaching to help out junior clubs.

Dublin-born Kelly, who played in goals with Sorrento, is a member of the Football West board — and is the WA State Manager for Business Development for Members Equity Bank. He is also the company's National Sponsorship Manager.

Former international keeper Franken, who quit playing in 2002, gave up his job as a schoolteacher to become the goalkeeping coach to the Socceroos. He was heavily involved in Australia's great showing in the 2006 World Cup finals.

Northern Ireland-born McNally, who played against Roxby in New Zealand in 1977, was a cornerstone of WA State teams through the 80's and 90's. He turned to coaching when he quit playing at the age of 50 a few years ago.

He is now the head coach of ECU Joondalup in the WA State League.

SIZZLING SANDRA

Sandra Brentnall, who was only 15 when she starred for the women's State team on their tour of Malaysia in 1977, has started playing again at the age of 45.

She has also taken up coaching — and recently led the Fremantle Spirit women's team to success in their league competition.

Sandra, who played many times for Australia, was inducted into the Hall of Champions in 1996.

- Talking of great women players, let's salute the efforts of Perth-based duo Lisa De Vanna and Collette McCallum, who were the stars of the Australian team that reached the quarter-finals of the 2007 Women's World Cup in China.

  Exciting striker De Vanna was the only Australian to be named in the FIFA Team of the Tournament, while McCallum was runner-up in the Asian Player of the Year awards.

- Congratulations to former World Cup referee Eddie Lennie, who will be admitted into the Australian Hall of Fame at their next induction function. Eddie is already a member of the WA Football Hall of Fame. He also starts a new job in January, 2008, as the Referee Development Manager of Football West.

- The next WA Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held on Saturday, July 26, 2008 at the Novotel Langley Hotel in Perth. Those wishing to express an early interest in attending should contact a Committee member.

- Russell Whitson has stepped down as a Committee member of the Hall of Fame due to poor health. We thank him for his contribution and wish him well.

Louis Prospero with Sergio Alfieri (right)

HOT BIDDING

A State team shirt, signed by all players at the Merdeka Cup anniversary function, brought some spirited bidding at an auction on the night.

It was eventually bought by former Bayswater star Sergio Alfieri, who played for the State team in the 1969 Merdeka Cup.

The shirt, which was donated by ex-State team player Carl McDarby, has since been superbly framed, with photographs of all the WA teams that competed in the Merdeka.

It was presented to Sergio by Louis Prospero and is now a hot collectors' piece.

- Some items in the silent auction, held on the same night, were generously donated by Jim Price.

  Sadly, Jim — a keen Tottenham fan and a devoted supporter of Perth Glory — died a few weeks after the function. The Committee passes on its sympathies to his widow, Barbara.